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THE
Danger and Mischiefs
OF
P O P E R Y,
BEING

Part of the *Fifth Pastoral Letter.*

By the Right Reverend Father in G O D,
EDMUND GIBSON, D. D.
Late Lord Bishop of L O N D O N.

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POPERY, &c.

IN the Year 1706, an Address from several of the Gentry and Clergy in *Lancashire*, was presented to the House of Peers by the then Bishop of *Chester* Sir *William Dawes*, complaining of the intolerable Boldness of the *Romish* Priests and Papists. Whereupon their Lordships represented to the Queen, That *it was absolutely necessary, for the safety of her Majesty's Royal Person and Government, that a more watchful Eye should be had over them for the Future;*

ture; and, for that Purpose, that a distinct and particular Account should be taken, of all Papists and reputed Papists in the Kingdom, with their respective Qualities, Estates, and Places of Abode. Accordingly, the necessary Orders were given by her Majesty, for taking a strict Survey of *Popery*, in the several Counties of the Kingdom; and at the same Time a Proclamation was issued, for a vigorous Execution of the Laws against *Papists*.

In conformity to these Resolutions, and to shew the Reasonableness, or rather Necessity thereof; an Assize Sermon was preached by me, then Rector of *Lambeth*, from these Words of the Prophet *Hosea*, (vii. 9.) *Strangers have devoured his Strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, grey Hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not.* This was then published under the Title *Of the Growth and Mischiefs of Popery*. And the *Growth* of it being visibly increased since that Time and the *Mischiefs* too sensibly felt at present; a few Extracts out of it, with some small Variations to bring it nearer to our present Circumstances, may possibly be of some Use to open the Eyes of our People, and to give them a clearer View than they seem yet to have, of the utter Inconsistency of *Popery*, (unobserved and neglected, to the
Degree

Degree it has been,) with the *Safety* and *Happiness* of this Protestant Country.

In the Chapter of which the Text is a Part, the Prophet is speaking of the Children of *Ephraim*; and the miserable Condition to which they had reduced themselves by mixing with the Heathen Nations. He complains in the Verse immediately before the Text, that *Ephraim had mixed himself among the People*, that is, among the *Egyptians* and *Assyrians*; and what this Mixture was, we learn from several Parts of the Prophecy, where they are charged with (a) *making Images and Idols*, with (b) *asking Councils at their Stocks*, and with (c) *making many Altars to Sin*: The *Egyptians* and *Assyrians* had taken the Advantage of the Indulgence and Encouragement they found among them, and by the Benefit thereof had enticed many of the *Israelites* to join in their Idolatries. The Mischief whereof is expressed in the Text; That these *Strangers* had *devour'd* the Strength they had, while they continued unanimous in the Worship of the True God.

The terrible Effects of this their Indulgence to Idolatry, and Unconcernedness for the Worship of God, did not only come to pass as it had been foretold, but the Prophet

A 3

himself

(a) *Hof.* iv. 12.

(b) viii. 11.

(c) xiii. 2.

himself lived to see it. By encouraging the Idolatrous Nations to the Prejudice of the true Religion, they had provoked God to Anger against them; and by suffering those Nations to seduce so many of the *Israelites* to Idolatry, they had exceedingly impaired their own Strength; and so, having made themselves ripe for Destruction, the King of *Affyria*, the Rod of God's Anger, found them an easy Prey, and carrying them into Captivity, placed his own People in their Stead.

Not to draw any *laboured* Parallel between the Kingdom of *Israel* with regard to *Pagan Idolaters*, and the Condition of these Kingdoms with regard to *Popish Idolaters*; Thus much is certain, That there is a People among us, whom we justly charge with *Idolatry*; That the Liberties they have taken for some Years past, have very much exceeded the Bounds which our Constitution has set them; That the Exercise of their Religion in all Parts of the Kingdom, has been carried on with much greater Boldness and Openness, than our Laws allow; That the Confidence of the Priests in their Attempts to seduce the Protestant Subjects of the Realm, has been beyond the Example of former Times; and, That presuming upon the Lenity and Tenderness of the Government, they have
actually

actually perverted many unwary and ignorant People.

By these Arts and Methods, too little observed and attended to on our Part, have *Strangers* been suffered to corrupt our People, and *devour our Strength*; for in no other Light than that of *Strangers*, does our Constitution allow us to consider Papists and Popery. Strangers to us in *Religion*; Strangers in *Government*; and Strangers in *Interest* and *Design*.

I. They are *Strangers* to us in *Religion*. By their Idolatries and Innovations, by perverting the Holy Scriptures and raising their own Traditions to an equal Authority, they have exceedingly corrupted the *Faith* and *Doctrine* of the Gospel. Their *Worship* is overcharged with a vast Variety of Superstitious Rites, in which the true Spirit of Devotion is swallowed up and lost; they have changed the Substance for the Shadow, and, contrary to the Apostle's Rule, have made it a Worship in the *Letter*, and not in the *Spirit*. Their *Discipline* is wholly exercised by Emissaries from *Rome*, set up in Opposition to the Spiritual Governors of our Church, and acting under the immediate Direction and Authority of a Foreign Head.

An' because the Church of *England* has purged herself from these Idolatries, Superstitions and Innovations, and rejecting their Traditions, has made the Scripture the Rule of her Faith, and has accommodated her Worship to the Word of God and the true Ends of Devotion, and delivered herself from the insupportable Tyranny of the Papal Chair; By this Means, we are become *Hereticks* and *Schismatics* in the Account of the Church of *Rome*; as such, the Sentence of Excommunication is yearly denounced against us by the Pope, and our Destruction is declared to be a meritorious Work. And that all this is not mere Form and Ceremony, but a Direction zealously pursued where-ever it is practicable; we see by the bloody Inquisitions in some of the Popish Countries, with the terrible Persecution upon the Protestants in a neighbouring Nation, and the swift Approaches to the same Cruelties at Home, when that Spirit could shew itself with Safety, under the Influence of a Popish Prince.

Far be it from us, to make this merciless Treatment of *our* Brethren, a Rule of our Carriage and Behaviour toward *their's*. We have not so learned Christ, as to think Fire and Faggot a fit Application to the *Consciences* of Christians, or to reckon the Destruction

struction of their Bodies a proper Means for the Salvation of their Souls. But, methinks, these Cruelties towards Protestants in other Nations, should make the Papists in our own somewhat more modest and cautious ; at least, they ought not to think themselves entitled thereby to *new* and *unusual* Liberties. And though the Good Nature and Religion of *Englishmen* forbid them to *copy* those Examples of Cruelty ; we may well be allowed so far to *observe* and *remember* them, as to be jealous of the Growth of that Religion among ourselves, which in other Countries could animate the Professors of it to such unhuman Barbarities towards our Protestant Brethren.

II. They are also *Strangers* to us in *Government*. Princes can have no Hold of the Members of the Church of *Rome*, while they own a superior Head, who claims a Power of Absolving Subjects from their Allegiance, and even Degrading and Excommunicating the Sovereign. And as this pretended Authority is chiefly exerted by the Pope against *Protestant* Princes, so are their People prepared to receive, approve, and execute his Sentences, by another ungodly Doctrine, That no Faith is to be kept with Hereticks. And to what seditious and cruel

Attempts, these Principles have blown up some of the Members of that Church, can be unknown to none, who have looked into the History of these Kingdoms, since the Beginning of Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign.

It is to be hoped, that many of our *English* Papists, having been born and bred in the same Air with ourselves, and receiving their Protection from the established Laws, have so good a Share of Tendernefs and Gratitude, as to be Proof against these cruel Suggestions of the Emissaries from *Rome*. But it is also to be feared, that there will be a Number at all Times of Condition and Inclination desperate enough, to undertake such Enterprizes as are agreeable to the Principles of that Church, and shall be judged by their Infalible Guide to be a seasonable Service to the common Cause. And we may well suppose, that such Dispositions are the more Strong and Numerous, (in proportion, as those *Emissaries*, so strong and numerous,) disown the Title of the Prince, in Favour of a Pretender of their own Religion : and that they are yet more ready and zealous to engage their Followers in those Principles, since the Nation, sufficiently sensible that the *English* Constitution will not thrive under a Popish Prince, have cut off their Hopes of a Popish Successor for ever ; except some bold and desperate

desperate Undertaking shall make his Way to the Throne.

It is far from the Temper of the *English*, and the Nature of our Constitution, to make Men *suffer* upon bare presumptions: But at the same Time, the Regard we owe to ourselves and our Constitution, calls upon us to be very *Watchful*, when we are sure there is an Enemy in our own Bowels. When we find such a Spirit moving among us, it behoves us to observe narrowly *which Way* it moves and to *what Degrees*; that it may be kept under such Restraints as the Safety of Church and State shall require. Their Principles in Effect declare, and we are all abundantly convinced, that whatever Strength they have, will upon a fair Opportunity be employed against us; and therefore it nearly concerns us, to know the Extent of that Strength, and to be jealous of the Increase of it. It is the Voice of the Nation, that we have no *present* or *future* Security, under God, but in the Prosperity of His Majesty's Arms, and the Succession in the Protestant Line; and how then can we answer it to ourselves, our Posterity, or our Religion, if we make it not our utmost Care, that they who we are sure have it in their *Will*, have it not also in their *Power*, to shake

or undermine these Foundations of our Safety ?

III. These two Oppositions, in Religion, and Government, suppose a third Sort, namely in *Interest* and *Design* : For the Spirit of that Religion is not wont to lie still without Designs, much less to overlook any fair Opportunities of serving them. If ever there was a Juncture that obliged the Papists in Prudence and Decency to more than ordinary *Tenderness in giving Offence*, it is now ; when their declared Disaffection to the Government makes them so *liable* to be suspected, and when the Success of *their* Aims and Wishes would evidently be the Ruin of *our* Laws and Religion. And it were happy for the Nation, and perhaps for themselves too, if their known Principles in Government and Religion were the *only* Testimony of their Designs. But this is a Happiness not to be hoped for, while their Priests are so open and bare-faced in making Proselytes of the weaker Sort, and (forgetting how shamefully they were baffled in a former Reign, and how obnoxious they are to the Laws at this Day) have not been afraid to send Challenges to the Ministers of our Church, on Purpose to carry off their Proselyte in a Kind of public Triumph, after they

they have made sure of him by private Arts : And further, while Priests and People rejoice at the Misfortunes of the Kingdom, and repine at any public Prosperity and Success, with such Freedom and Openness as few other Nations would bear. In a Word, instead of guarding against Suspensions, and a prudent Care not to give Offence or Jealousy (a Behaviour that might well be expected in their present Circumstances) too many among them seem to be trying what Degrees of Provocation the Government will bear.

These Practices (we may hope) are condemned by the more *prudent* and *modest* Part of that Persuasion ; who must therefore think it reasonable, that the established Constitution should provide for its own Safety ; and if that Provision should happen to bring Inconveniences upon them, they will lay the Blame where it ought to rest, that is, upon the intemperate Zeal of the Emissaries from *Rome*, and of others whom they have been able to work into these provoking Measures.

IV. We have already shown, how opposite they are in Religion and Government, and in all their Measures and Designs, to the established Constitution of Church and State. And the Consequence of this Opposition is, that what they gain, we lose ; whatever new
Strength

Strength or Spirits we suffer them to get, are all drained out of our own Body. Every Profelyte they make, immediately becomes our professed Enemy, not only in Religion, but in Policy too; lifting himself at the same Time under two Foreign Heads, one in the Church, and the other in the State. And it is generally observed, that such Converts are more *remarkably active* and *furious* in the Cause they have espoused: Whether it is, that Fickle Heads are naturally fond of new Things, or that they think it for their Honour to make a Show of a *thorough* Conviction.

Indeed how should they not become more *active* and *furious*, when such care is taken at receiving a *new Convert* into their Church? and such a terrible Oath administered to them! It is too long to be transcribed, and too shocking to be repeated, as may be judged from the Conclusion—“ I do therefore say
 “ upon my Oath, by God Almighty and
 “ these sacred Gospels, that I will without
 “ wavering remain in the Communion of
 “ the Church of *Rome*. And if I shall, by
 “ any *Occasion* or *Argument* divide myself
 “ from this Unity, *May* I, incurring the
 “ Guilt or Perjury, be found condemned to
 “ eternal Punishment, and have my Portion
 “ with the Author of Schism in the World
 “ to come.”

So HELP me GOD.

God be thanked, it is only upon the Weak and Ignorant, that this Poison works. The more discerning among them, retain the same Detestation they ever had, of the manifold Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*; and a very learned(d) Person of that Number has publicly warned the Nation of the Boldness and Success of the Priests in making Converts, and tells us, from his own Observation, the Arts and Methods by which they carry on their Work, and laments, that *the Growth of Popery among us should be greater than formerly, notwithstanding the Increase of Penal Laws.*

V. The truth is, those Penal Laws are so much softned, or rather laid aside, by the *English* Clemency and Good-nature, that it has long been the Wish of wise and considering Men, to see fewer Laws and more effectual Execution. They have lived so long under the Terror of Penal Laws, and found so little Inconvenience from them, that it will be hard to convince them that the Legislature is ever in Earnest. And yet I doubt these very Laws, being Part of our *English* Constitution, give a Handle to Evil-minded Men Abroad, to enlarge upon the Sufferings of their *English* Brethren; and so while in great Tenderneſs,

(d) *Dr. Hicks his Conference with a Popish Priest; in the Preface.*

Tenderneſs, we are ſuſpending our Laws at Home, we are reproached abroad as the moſt cruel Perſecutors. This is but an ill Return for the great Indulgence that their Brethren have found among us; which ſhould oblige both Priests and People, at leaſt to do *juſtice* to the Church of *England*; by confeſſing, that as the ſeveral Laws they complain of were firſt made upon ſome remarkable Attempts of the Papiſts againſt the eſtabliſhed Conſtitution of Church or State; ſo nothing but freſh Provocations of the ſame Kind has driven the *Engliſh* to the Execution of them. They know, that by the Laws of ſome other Countries it is criminal to be a Proteſtant, and that the moſt peaceable Behaviour is no Protection; and they know as well, that it has not been the Papiſt as ſuch, but only the *provoking, ſeditious, and turbulent* Papiſt, who has found any Diſturbance from the *Engliſh* Government.-----To come to Particulars;

VI. In the Infancy of the Reformation under *Henry* the Eighth, the great Work was to extirpate the Authority of the Pope, and eſtabliſh the Supremacy of the Prince. Now both theſe the Point under our preſent Conſideration *ſuppoſes* to be ſettled; which is not, by what Means the Papal Authority was excluded, but in what Way thoſe who adhere to
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the Religion of the Pope, have been treated in a Country where his Authority was abolish-
ed. And it is well known, that the Disaf-
fection of that Prince to the main *Doctrines* of
Popery was not so great, as to induce him
to any remarkable Hardships towards those,
who would at least be *silent* under his own
Supremacy.

His Son King *Edward* the Sixth went fur-
ther, and established (e) *an Uniformity of Service*
and Administration of the Sacraments throughout
the Realm; but that Law only enjoined the
Minister to use this and not the Mass Book;
and the People, not to interrupt the Minister,
or speak against the Service. And when it
appear'd by Experience, that the (f) *Missals*,
which had been formerly used, were a great
Obstruction to the Uniformity intended, they
were only called-in, to give a more free and
easy Passage to the *established* Service; with-
out disturbing either Priest or People in the
private Exercise of their Religion.

Notwithstanding the bloody Reign of Queen
Mary; so far was her Successor the glorious
Queen *Elizabeth* from the least Disposition to
Cruelty, that she contented herself to restore
the Supremacy and the Publick (g) Service to
their former State; allowing the Papists a

Share

(e) 2 & 3 *Edw.* 6. (f) 3 & 4 *Edw.* 6. c. 10.
(g) *Camd. Ann.* 1558. 5 *Eliz.* c. 1.

Share in her Counsels ; and, in a subsequent Law against the Pope's Authority, exempting Peers of the Realm from the disabling Oath, and frequently declaring that no Subject who would live quietly and peaceably, should be disturbed on Account of Religion.

'Tis true, the (b) Laws afterwards grew more severe, but it was because the Papists grew more seditious. To execute *Bulls of Absolution and Reconciliation* from Rome, or to receive Absolution and Reconciliation in Virtue of such Bulls, was made high Treason. But let the History of the three preceding Years explain that Law, and determine whether it was owing to the Severity of Protestants or the Sedition of Papists. There we find, that the Pope had granted Authority to (i) *Saunders* and others, to absolve all the *English* who would return to the Church of *Rome*, and that they were very zealous in the Work ; That the same (k) Pope had sent his Bull into *England* by *Morton* the Priest, to anathematize the Queen, deprive her of the Throne, and absolve her Subjects from their Oaths of Obedience ; That in virtue thereof, many of the People were withdrawn from their Allegiance, a dangerous Rebellion raised, circular Letters sent to the Papists to rise and assist in the Cause, and the Bull

(b) 13 *Eliz. c. 1.* (i) *Camd. Ann.* 1568. (k) — 1569.

(*l*) Bull itself published in the City, in a very open and insolent Manner.

Ten Years after, we find a new Enforcement of the Law against (*m*) Bulls; but it was because the Priests had found new Devices to evade the former Law, and to carry on the Work of *Absolving* and *Reconciling* by other Ways. We also find Penalties for saying and hearing of (*n*) Mass; but we find in the History of the same Time, that great Numbers of Priests were sent into *England* and *Ireland* from the Seminaries abroad, under Pretence of preaching and administering the Sacraments, but really to withdraw the Subjects from their Obedience to the Queen. The same Law lays a Penalty upon absenting from Church, and, after a Year's Absence, enjoins the finding of Sureties for their Behaviour; which is not to be thought strange or cruel, when the Emissaries of the Church of *Rome*, under whose Discipline the Absenters lived, were the profess'd Teachers of Rebellion, and when a Design had been detected between the *Spanish* King and the Pope, to dethrone the Queen, and restore (*o*) Popery in the Kingdom.

The next (*p*) Law against Papists commands all *Jesuits*, *Seminary* Priests, and others, to depart the Realm. But turn to the History of
that

(*l*) *Camd. Ann.* 1570. (*m*) 23 *Eliz. c. 1.* (*n*) *Camd. Ann.* 1580. (*o*) — 1578. (*p*) 27 *Eliz. c. 2.*

that Time, and there you will find great Numbers of Priests coming daily into *England*, who taught that the (*q*) Queen was no Queen, and that whatever had been done by her Authority since the Bull of Pope *Pius*, was null and void. The same Law forbids the sending of Children or Contributions to the (*r*) Seminaries abroad ; and so the same Historian tells us, of great Numbers of Children sent over to those Seminaries, and received there, on Condition that they first made a Vow to return, when they were instructed in their Learning and Discipline ; that is, in the rankest Principles of Sedition and Rebellion.

While they were thus diligent in sending over their Emissaries to *Corrupt* the People, it is not to be wonder'd, that the great (*s*) Council of the Land should countermine their Endeavours, by obliging all who should be found guilty of *Corrupting*, to *Abjure* the Realm. And if, in the same Year, another (*t*) Law was made to banish Papists from Court, and confine them to the Neighbourhood of their own Dwellings; our (*u*) Histories will explain it, by shewing, that in the Compass of a very few Years, several Designs had been form'd and carried on, to *Assassinate* the Queen.

King

(*q*) *Camd. Ann.* 1581. (*r*) — 1580. (*s*) 35 *Eliz. c. 1.*
 (*t*) 35 *Eliz. c. 2.* (*u*) *Camd. Ann.* 1584, 1585, 1586, 1587.

King(w) James I. began his Reign with a Revival of Queen Elizabeth's Laws against Popery; and well he might, when he reflected upon the many wicked Designs against the Person and Government of his Predecessor, and that, upon a Prospect of her Death, they had, in the most publick Manner, disputed his Title to succeed.

Three(x) Years after, we find Papists confined, under higher Penalties, to their Places of Abode, and greater Rewards proposed for the discovering of Priests, and expresse Declarations required, against the Pope's Authority to depose Princes and absolve Subjects from their Obedience, and against dispensing with Oaths, and taking them with Equivocations and mental Reservations. But it is to be remember'd, that all this was done upon the Discovery of the most hellish and execrable Plot that we read of in any Age or Nation, the Gunpowder-Treason; which, we all know, had been carried on by the Priests, upon those very Principles, to the Point of Execution.

To these Restraints, there were added, in the Reign of King (y) Charles the Second, the *Sacramental Test*, and the Exclusion of Papists out of the great Council of the Land. For the Occasion of which, I need not appeal to History: I may appeal to the Memory of
Persons*

(w) 1 Jac. c. 4. (x) 3 Jac. c. 4, 5. (y) 25 Car. 2. c. 2. 30. Car. 2. c. 1.

Persons still living, for the Countenance given in that Reign to Popish Measures, and the Impatience of the Papists to put them in Execution, and the Attempts to shorten the Way for a Popish Successor to the Throne; who, when he came to the Throne, did abundantly justify the *Wisdom* of our Legislators, by making the Removal of that *Test*, one of his first Endeavours for the Establishment of Popery.

VII. It may be thought Presumption in one of our Order, and especially before this (z) learned Audience, to intermeddle in the Laws and Statutes of the Realm; but it will be favourably consider'd, that they are Laws which concern *Religion*, and are only cited in an *Historical* Way; that, by comparing the seditious Practices of the Papists, as recorded in our Histories, with the several Laws they have occasioned; it may appear at one View, That the Papists have been the sole Authors of their own Misfortunes; That these Restraints, from Time to Time, were brought upon them by Rebellion, and not (as they pretend) by Religion; That the *English* Legislature have proceeded in their Restraints *Gradually*, as the repeated Attempts of the Papists upon the Persons and Government of our Princes, have render'd them necessary; and,
That

(z) *The Judges, &c.*

That nothing can extort a sanguinary Law from the *English* Temper, but an indispensable Regard to their own Religion and Government.

But what Severity soever may be pretended in the *Laws*, it is very certain there is none in the *Execution*. And he who considers how strict the *Laws*, and how high the Penalties are, against any Priest who shall attempt to pervert a Subject to Popery, or shall say Mass, or even be found in the Realm? and against all others who shall harbour a Priest in their Houses, or send Children or Money to a Seminary abroad: Whoever, I say, is apprized of the high Penalties upon these Practices, (to name no more) and then considers how common and familiar they are among us, will see how little Mischief the Papists fear from these terrible *Laws* they complain of, and how much they are indebted to the Goodness and Tenderness of the *English* Government.

But they must not hope that the *English* Good-nature will hold out against all Provocations: The *Laws* will rouse themselves and break loose at the Sight of such unprecedented Freedom and Boldness, as we have beheld of late Days. It is a known Crime in the Eye of the Law, to import Popish Books from abroad; but we have seen them printed and published at home, and dispersed over
the

24 *The Danger and Mischiefs, &c.*

the Nation with the greatest Industry; and not only so, but ¶ we have seen Advertisements of the Place where a Variety of Popish Books were to be publickly sold. They know it is Capital to attempt the Perverting of a Protestant Subject; which should oblige them at least to carry on the Work with far greater *Caution* and *Secrecy*, than they seem to think needful. They are strictly forbidden to send Children to the Seminaries abroad; but if a publick † Complaint was well grounded, (as I doubt not but it was) they are now beginning to bring the Seminaries home.

VIII. These and the like Provocations stirred up the Government § to take a strict Survey of the State of Popery in the Kingdom, in order to apply some effectual Remedy to that growing Evil. And as long as the Priests of the Church of *Rome* are so veay busy and active in their Work, it can never be an unbecoming Part in the Ministers of a Protestant Church, to lay to Heart the visible Increase of Popery, and to warn the People how zealous they are in promoting it; that so, we may raise an *equal* Zeal and Concern for the true Protestant Religion established among us.

¶ *Ann.* 1746. † *In Convocation; of a Seminary in Hampshire.* § *Ann.* 1706.

F I N I S.

